1689

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT
ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH,
On WEDNESDAY, *April* 13, 1774,
BEFORE
His Royal Highneſs WILLIAM *Duke of* GLOUCESTER,
PRESIDENT,
AND THE
GOVERNORS
OF THE
LONDON-HOSPITAL,
AT
MILE-END,
FOR THE
RELIEF of all Sick and Diſeaſed Perſons, eſpecially MANUFACTURERS, and SEAMEN in MERCHANT-SERVICE, *&c.*

By BROWNLOW,
Lord Biſhop of LITCHFIELD *and* COVENTRY.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the PRESIDENT and GOVERNORS.

LONDON:
Printed by H. S. WOODFALL, in *Pater-Noſter-Row.*
M.DCC.LXXIV.

C. 16

BRITISH MUSEUM

1 Epiſtle of St. Paul to Timothy, Chap. vi. Verſe 18.

Rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate.

IT is the ſpirit of the apoſtolical writings to raiſe in the mind of the chriſtian, an higher ſenſe and fuller meaſure of goodneſs. Conſiderations are added to him, which affect not the man who will be wiſe above what is written; and reject the new lights which revelation hath thrown upon his duty. Is it, for inſtance, right and equitable, that man ſhould ſhew mercy to one who is like himſelf, how much more is it ſo, when the commands of God are added to this call, and dictate of our nature?

The goſpel hath placed this duty before us in colours it had not before; with arguments more eſpecially calculated to touch our affections, and influence our practice. It is recommended by example, enjoined by authority, propoſed to our

47

imitation under various edifying parables, and enforced with all the weight of direct and poſitive precept. The works of mercy which are natural to man, are the religious duty and obedience of the chriſtian; for he is taught to look up for inſtruction in his conduct to the author and finiſher of his faith, who went about doing good.

These then are the diſtinguiſhing characters of a rich man, exerciſing charity under the chriſtian diſpenſation. He not only indulgeth the ſympathy of his nature in relieving the diſtreſs immediately before him, and the ſight of which torments and pains him, but he follows after charity; conſidering the cauſe of the poor, ſtudying the manifold wants of men, "He is rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate."

I shall not at this time explain the nature and obligation of charity, in an age and country diſtinguiſhed for its humanity, experienced and well grounded in policy, enlightened by chriſtianity; in which a free acceſs is open to the firſt and genuine ſprings of truth, and to be ignorant in the ſeveral branches of benevolence, is as much without excuſe as to be negligent and unmindful of them. I ſhall only obſerve, that the true principle of ſelf-denial, and forgiveneſs

giveneſs of injuries, a concern for the ſpiritual welfare of each other, with the brotherly alliance in which all mankind are united, are each of them refinements on the ſocial duties of life which it was reſerved for the doctrine of our Saviour to make known. The many pious and uſeful inſtitutions for the public relief of the poor, to which the heathen world were ſtrangers; but which ſince the coming of Chriſt have been gradually multiplied, and encreaſed, are a farther diſtinction between the different periods of our improvement; an additional proof that the heart of man is become ſenſible of a new obligation; that the conſcience is now engaged, where before the natural feelings were the ſingle principle of action, and that of courſe his ingenuity and powers are now more vigorouſly exerted in the practice, as he is more fully informed of the obligation of charity.

Public inſtitutions therefore, ſuch as we are now met to encourage, have this plea of merit in the firſt place, that they are amongſt the means of forwarding and aſſiſting the good work of charity at large. Before I come to the particular advantages of the London Hoſpital, I ſhall briefly recommend it in common with all others, under this general view.

It is obvious to remark that the occaſional effuſions of bounty by the rich, a little alms diſpenſed to-day, and to-morrow with-held, will in frequent inſtances fail of their effect. A conſtant and regular evil will not yield to a caſual and capricious remedy. And this is of itſelf a good reaſon why the practice of charity appears to be a favorite precept in the chriſtian religion, which is a ſource of univerſal good to mankind.

It is very fit that this uncertainty ſhould be corrected; that ſyſtem and order ſhould be introduced, to render the principle uniform and conſtant; that the needy objects of compaſſion ſhould be brought together, and held up in one view to the notice of the almſgiver; that the ſmaller ſtreams of bounty ſhould be collected, as they flow from the hand of individuals, and conveyed in one certain channel to their purpoſe.

If we judge from the public diſplay, the many eminent inſtances of charity among us, it is more neceſſary to give this bias and direction to the alms of the rich, than to teach the obligation itſelf. The principle is known and acknowledged, but amidſt the buſier ſcenes of life, it is by a variety of cauſes hindered and obſtructed.

If we carry on our thoughts in this particular train, I think we ſhall act a friendly part to this and all other ſuch extraordinary modes of relief. We ſhall find that they are a means of bringing into action, that benevolence which without them had remained unexerciſed; that they extend the knowledge of the rich over many objects, who had otherwiſe periſhed unheeded and unſeen; objects, who needed only to be known, their miſeries, as I may ſay, commanding relief; that they are a means of making friends to the unfortunate who had no other poſſible way to acquire them; thus connecting the various ranks of men, who in the ordinary courſe of things are ſeparated and disjoined, the high with the low, the rich with the poor, in a manner the moſt uſeful and beneficial to both.

It is certainly true that this excellent virtue hath other enemies to combat, enemies perhaps more continually obſtructing her, than thoſe which are commonly cited, inhumanity and hardneſs of heart. Few men are able to behold affliction with indifference, much leſs to inſult it by cruelty and contempt; yet how many are there who will not look upon her ſorrows! who will not ſtay to liſten to the tale of her diſtreſs! but in their haſte paſs by on the other ſide, forget the poor, and conſider not their cauſe. Diſſipation, inattention, pleaſure, buſineſs, with the manifold purſuits and intereſts of men will often turn thoſe from the exerciſe of charity, who yet admire and reverence the principle; who are full of humanity and compaſſion, when properly addreſſed, nay perhaps who manifeſt the tenderneſs of their hearts by frequent acts of miſplaced, and injudicious almſgiving.

I APPEAL to many amongſt you, even thoſe the leaſt given to reflection; is it that you loathe? is it that you fear to reflect? I am perſuaded this is not the caſe, the true reaſon is (a reaſon almoſt equally without excuſe) that you are not moved, you are not excited to reflection. This is the office of privacy and retirement; whereas in the crouded ſcenes of life, your attention is diverted, and your thoughts engaged, inſomuch that you fulfil not the duty, though you confeſs the obligation; and were I to expoſtulate with you on the barren fruitfulneſs of your conduct, your natural reply would be, no ſcenes of miſery preſent themſelves to us, we ſee no objects of diſtreſs, where ſhould we beſtow our alms? yet theſe objects of diſtreſs are about your doors; their cry is in every ſtreet; their ſorrows are inhanced by your inattention and neglect; and who knows, but their numbers are encreaſed

encreaſed by the example of your extravagance; and all this, at the time when you even queſtion their exiſtence.

Is it not true then that the principle of compaſſion is impeded in its action? confeſſed in theory, it is denied in practice, and hath need of ſome extraordinary aid to quicken its influence on the conduct of men.

THUS I think we may fairly conſider all public inſtitutions of charity, as one amongſt the means by which the principle is brought to its effect. I argue not againſt cruelty and avarice, I truſt that the goodneſs of our cauſe will diſarm them of their ſtrongeſt objections. I am attentive to take away the undeſigned, I could almoſt call them accidental impediments to this virtue, which may ariſe from the cauſes abovementioned: and I ſay that in this ſhape we may engage the attention of all, even the warmeſt votaries both of buſineſs and pleaſure; we may catch their thoughts in the moſt profitable ſeaſons of reflection, and turn them to our advantage. The ſtate of an hoſpital may be read and conſidered in the cloſet; its rules may be the ſubject of converſation; its effect and improvements may be ſuch, as to render it the object even of faſhionable admiration.

THUS far then the London Hoſpital is joined with all others in the common cauſe of ſtirring up charity, which may not act until it be thus called forth, in contributing to fertiliſe the heart of man, whereby the good ſeeds ſhall readily ſpring up from among the weeds and tares which choaked them up, and obſtructed them. And when this is done, we know not how wide the good effects may ſpread, if we throw but a ſpark on the inactive matter, it is prepared to communicate the genial influence it hath once received. Other virtues may ſucceed when the mind is open to the impreſſion; we may add to charity faith, knowledge, temperance, and patience, until in the end we become perfect in the whole ſyſtem of chriſtian morality.

HAVING conſidered our inſtitution in this general view, as favouring the good work of charity, let us now ſee if it be not in other reſpects alſo of eminent advantage to mankind. I ſay not to the poor alone, but to mankind; for it is formed on the three great principles which make the foundation of his happineſs. It is grounded in good policy, humanity, and religion. Amidſt a poliſhed and well cultivated people, under a juſt and well ordered government, there will ariſe a variety of inſtitutions for the purpoſes of policy, humanity, and religion, each having in view the good of the whole, and aiming in their ſeveral ſpheres to forward and advance it. But that is the moſt perfect amongſt them, in which theſe three ſeveral principles are united; each with its proper ſhare of influence, yet each having no more than its ſhare; they ſhould check and controul each other. For it would be eaſy to ſhew that in framing an inſtitution of this kind, policy may be too ſevere in her ſuggeſtions, humanity too mild and indulgent; religion alſo may through our blindneſs fail; as is proved by the monaſtic indolence in foreign countries, where the active mind of man is withdrawn from all the concerns which naturally belong to his ſtation. I ſay then they ſhould unite their influence, if humanity ſuggeſts the occaſion of relief, policy ſhould confine us to the occaſion, ſhould direct the kind and meaſure of our relief. Religion alſo ſhould add its ſeaſonable improvement to the comforts which the others have ſupplied.

An Hoſpital then will ſtand high upon the liſt, will rank amongſt the wiſeſt and beſt of human inſtitutions; as all theſe advantages are found to attend it. A ſpirit of religion is revived; the love of induſtry renewed; at the time that the diſtreſs of the poor is relieved:—In proof of what I have advanced let us look into the nature and deſign of the London Hoſpital.

It is opened for the reception and relief of the ſick and diſeaſed amongſt the poor; and eſpecially of ſuch as in this buſy ſcene of life, are maimed or injured by ſudden accidents. Such unfortunate perſons are here provided with all that their condition requires. They are lodged with ſafety, ſupported with wholeſome diet, aſſiſted with advice and medicine, in ſhort they are ſupplied with every means of comfort, which the hour of ſickneſs will admit. That hour which in every ſtation of life is a ſeaſon of great diſtreſs, but how much more amongſt the poor, when the heart is ſunk and diſcouraged, when penury and ſickneſs are united, and bitter apprehenſions of future want ſhall aggravate the pains of the afflicted ſufferer!

Industry is that which under the bleſſing of God enſures happineſs and peace to the labouring part of life. This blindneſs is the property of vice, that the idle man defeats his own purpoſe. Relinquiſhing the poſt that is aſſigned to him, he relinquiſhes the very means of his happineſs; in flying from labour he flies to miſery and dependance. Every interruption of induſtry is, as ſuch, an attack upon the happineſs of the

poor;

poor; and diſeaſe is leſs dreaded by them as a cauſe of pain, than as a deprivation of time, and hindrance in the neceſſary purſuit of that, which is the ſpring of every comfort they enjoy.

OBSERVE then the ſcene of orderly and domeſtic ſociety ſubſiſting in the poor man's houſe, where all depending on the aſſiſtance of each other, mutually labour in their mutual ſupport. All that is valuable, all that is dear to them depends on the regular ſupplies of induſtry and trade. All their views and all their endeavours are directed to this point, and ſo long as the buſy ſcene continues, it is crowned with plenty, and filled with ſatisfaction and joy unknown to the higher ſtations of men. It exhibits a ſyſtem of moral œconomy, that is no where elſe to be found; wherein the parent is at once the guardian and inſtructor, the child is the dutiful ſervant and aſſiſtant; each adminiſtering to the wants of thoſe whom they moſt eſteem and love. It teaches the difficult leſſon of philoſophy, that happineſs is totally independent of riches; that it needs not the diſtinction of luxury and rank; but that the poor, if they diſtinguiſh their true intereſts, have an equal enjoyment with the higheſt orders of men, in all the real improvements, and all the rational pleaſures of life.

WHEN you have conſidered this pleaſing and inſtructive ſcene, then think how uncertain, how precarious is its endurance! think on the frailty and weakneſs of our frame, the numerous liſt of diſorders ſet around us, the peſtilence that walketh in darkneſs, and the ſickneſs that deſtroyeth at the noon-day; think that the liſt of theſe calamities is encreaſed amongſt the poor, new dangers ariſing ſometimes out of penury itſelf, and ſometimes from the very nature of the trade they follow; and we ſhall find that they who have the greater need of health, are the moſt expoſed to the want of it. Add to this the ſudden and terrible accidents which too often overtake the unwary labourer, in the midſt of his duty, cutting at once the thread of that induſtry on which all his hopes were founded; and rendering him in a moment the burden of thoſe, who before knew no other ſupport than him.

EVEN the ſlighter injuries unſkilfully treated, or perhaps of neceſſity neglected, may diſable an induſtrious labourer for his life. Does his poverty remove him from the ordinary means of medical aſſiſtance? that very poverty renders ſuch aſſiſtance the more eſſentially needful to him. Shall he languiſh in delay, who requires the ſpeedier help? Let the ſons of eaſe and affluence

ence conſider this; it is to the humbler and more toilſome offices of life, that they owe all the peculiar comforts they enjoy. Are they exempt from theſe dangers? let them think on the duties which belong to their exemption. If the poor are in want of the neceſſaries, whilſt the rich abound with the ſuperfluities of life, the inference is plain, the ſympathy and compaſſion of the one are the means of relief to the other, the providential and appointed means; ſo inſtituted by the goodneſs, and ſo ordained by the command of God, who hath not deſerted the leaſt of his creatures. If charity in the rich is an obligation and duty, it is moral and juſt to conclude that in the poor it is a right.—But farther,

It is a teſtimony every day borne to the excellence of virtue, of temperance, and of religion, that they who neglect and tranſgreſs them moſt, are yet brought to confeſs their value, and point them out as a rule of life to others, even to the condemnation of their own practice. Luxury and wealth, nay diſſipation itſelf is not able to exempt the moſt heedleſs parent from an anxious concern about the welfare and health, and particularly the diſpoſition of mind and upright principles of his children. Whatever

ever may be the privileges of rank and fortune, this is not one of them.

The higheſt of men ſhall acknowledge the feelings and attachments of nature; even they ſhall ſympathize with the poor and induſtrious parent who is loaded with a double portion of this concern. The indigent labourer well knows that he muſt himſelf watch over this eſſential concern of his children; having no means to defray the charge of ſubſtituted inſtruction. He knows that the induſtry which ſupports his children, ſaves and defends them alſo. He knows that the idle may be tempted; the poor may be driven by neceſſity; the warmth of ill-directed paſſions may delude them; the ignorance of a mind uninformed may miſlead them; the extremity of want may impel them to deſtruction. He knows therefore that the habit of employment, which ſupports them now, muſt be the ſchool of their future virtue; muſt by their patient endurance of it, ſerve as a protection in their years of weakneſs, until age and education ſhall have brought them to the knowledge of their better intereſts, and ſupplied them with ſtrength and judgement to guide them in looking towards their own ſupport. The vigilance of the parent muſt here be ever on the ſtretch;

his preſence and attention are neceſſary to the guidance and direction of their conduct ; and the example of his induſtry muſt be ever before their eyes, as a means of inſtruction, too often the only means, which poverty can afford to her children.

How ſoon then, how very ſoon may all this ſyſtem of domeſtic virtue be deſtroyed! When, as is too commonly the caſe, daily labour ſupplies but the ſubſiſtence of the day, the ſhorteſt interruption is fatal. Sickneſs of a ſhort date only may diſſolve the union in which all the ſtrength of this family conſiſts. Stop but the ordinary courſe of ſupplies, and we behold them with their arms enfeebled, and their ſpirits ſunk, falling from the taſk to which affection and neceſſity call them, and thrown helpleſs and deſtitute upon the world, to ſubſiſt on the ſlender pittance which humanity alone affords, or which the colder proviſions of the law ſuggeſts.

It is not neceſſary that we ſhould ſuffer our imaginations to trace a ſcene, ſo full of trouble, through all its poſſible miſeries. I have ſaid enough to prove that ſickneſs is a critical ſeaſon of diſtreſs, which needs more than ordinary help ; and that an inſtitution intended for relief in this point, is founded on the true principles on which public and private happineſs depend; on the principles of policy, of humanity, and of religion. And I ſay religion not only as in the view above-mentioned, it upholds the induſtry of the poor, which is as a ſchool of morality to them; but as there is alſo a ſpecial proviſion that all chriſtian offices ſhall be ſupplied to our patients in confinement. The hour of retirement is at all times favorable to reflection, but eſpecially when the heart is humbled by affliction and pain. A miniſter of the church is therefore at hand to inſtil in the moſt profitable moments, the ſpiritual leſſons of religion; which when duly impreſſed may have a laſting influence on the minds of our patients, and may turn the occaſion of diſtreſs which they lament, into the moſt permanent bleſſing of their lives.

How fortunate in every light is then the end of their relief, not only as it relates to them, but as it reſpects the intereſts of their family and their country; the ſcene of peaceful induſtry is renewed which hath been alike their happineſs and their pride. Honeſt labour is aſſiſted, and thoſe virtuous connexions encouraged amongſt the poor, which render them at once happy in themſelves, and uſeful to the community. Manufactures and arts will flouriſh, when the heart of the labourer is at eaſe, enſured againſt the moſt perilous incident of his condition. And the encreaſing wealth and proſperity of the public ſhall manifeſt the number and value of ſuch uſeful and induſtrious members.

These obſervations are, I flatter myſelf, ſufficient to eſtabliſh, that an hoſpital is founded on the true and proper principles on which all public inſtitutions ſhould reſt. That if a peaceable and moral conduct is to be cultivated amongſt the poor, if trade and commerce are to be encouraged, if induſtry is uſeful, and chriſtian charity beneficial to mankind; then, this is an inſtitution worthy of our utmoſt care; for it is a ready means of aſſiſting and promoting all theſe excellent purpoſes. But before I conclude, there is yet another light in which I ſhall remind you of its peculiar merit.

It is a nurſery for the uſeful ſcience of medicine. Its advantages in this reſpect are not confined to the walls of the Hoſpital itſelf, but are extended over the whole race of mankind. The moſt eminent practitioners in every branch of medicine attend; and the recovery of the patients is but one of the good purpoſes anſwered by their attendance. Experience is the mother of this ſcience, which hath ever profited more by obſervation and practice, than by theory and the labor of the cloſet. Thus the treaſures of knowledge are encreaſed in this inſtance, by the exerciſe of our charity. Virtue and ſcience go hand in hand to the advancement of the honor of God, and the welfare of mankind. At the time that we relieve the preſent neceſſity of our patients, we tranſmit to poſterity a more intimate knowledge of God's capital work, the frame and conſtitution of man, together with all the benefits to be derived from a good and well-conducted Hoſpital.

I THINK I have now reminded you of the principal benefits which the preſent charity ſupplies; I ſay reminded you only of the principal benefits, for I am perſuaded that if time and ſuch occaſions as this would allow, many others might be ſuggeſted, and theſe be more copiouſly treated. But it is neceſſary now that with ſome general obſervations I ſhould conclude.

EVERY Inſtitution deſerves our care which tends to enable or diſpoſe mankind, to take their various parts in life; and to purſue them in due obſervance of religion and good manners. It is in this view a matter of the firſt importance that the ſpirit of induſtry be kept up amongſt the poor. And all public regulations intended for their indulgence and aſſiſtance ſhould have this point eſpecially in view. Relieving their diſtreſs yet rendering the occaſion of their relief, a new ſpur and incentive to their natural ingenuity and powers. The utmoſt profuſion of bounty will not ſilence the clamour and diſcontent of the idle, nor ſave them from the ſeduction of vice. Notwithſtanding therefore in the variety of our feelings, in the different complexion of our minds and tempers, a fortunate and perhaps a providential remedy is found for the variety of different wants in men, yet all will alike agree, that induſtry and honeſty in diſtreſs appear to make their firſt demand. That charity however mild and indulgent to vice ſhould in the firſt place be the patron of virtue. If ſo, in what ſhape can the cauſe of induſtry and virtue be more eſſentially ſerved, what choicer gift can we beſtow on them, than that alacrity and ſpirit which enlivens the heart of the labourer, when ſecure and happy in his domeſtic concerns. This friendly office on our part will operate on his conduct as a means of ſobriety and order, and as a ground of his attachment to the civil peace and welfare of his country. He will be ready in his ſubmiſſion to government, and will manifeſt a willing acquieſcence in the neceſſary laws of ſubordination, when bound by the pleaſing ties of affection to his family, and gratitude to his benefactors. Amidſt a people generous and well-inclined, this is perhaps the moſt wiſe and politic, as well as the moſt pleaſing meaſure of reſtraint; for the virtues of men are of different caſts, and they will often be rouſed to their duty by well-ſeaſoned acts of kindneſs and charity, when the cold unfeeling letter of the law will fail of that effect: We cannot err then if we diſtinguiſh amongſt the ordinary objects of humanity the patients which are now before us. We cannot err, if an extraordinary meaſure of our bounty be given to relieve them in that ſeaſon of diſtreſs, when the terrors of the mind, and the pains of the body conſpire in their affliction; if we freely bear our part in this ſyſtem of benevolence ſo rich in its effects; when at once we comfort the worthy patient in his ſufferings, calm the anxiety of thoſe who look up to him for ſupport, and encourage the induſtry and virtue of his children who live by his example and preſence; when we finally lead to the welfare and happineſs of mankind by advancing the knowledge, and furthering the improvement of this valuable ſcience of medicine, but above all by ſpreading the influence of this truly beneficial and purely chriſtian virtue, Charity.

All this I beſeech you, brethren, to do in the name of Chriſt, as you each of you in your ſeveral infirmities have need of his compaſſion, and look for the ſeaſonable aſſiſtance of his grace.

7 DE65

FINIS.